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PRESS RELEASE

Central Asia Experts Discuss Guidelines for Avian Influenza Surveillance at the Regional Conference organized with the U.S. Government Support

ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN—More than 150 specialists from the Ministries of Health and Agriculture from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan attended the “Central Asia Regional Conference on Practical Aspects of Avian Influenza Surveillance,” held in Almaty from December 4-6, 2006. The conference was organized by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Winrock International to help regional specialists develop guidelines for avian influenza surveillance, as well as for detection, investigation, and containment of outbreaks in poultry and humans.

“The guidelines prepared at this conference will help governments of Central Asia respond to the threat of avian influenza,” U.S. Ambassador for Kazakhstan John Ordway said at the opening of the conference. “This can help reduce the medical, economic, and political consequences that could result from an influenza epidemic.” Such guidelines will fill existing gaps in pandemic preparedness plans and enable countries to respond promptly and adequately to dangerous diseases like avian influenza. Following the conference, CDC and Winrock International, with funding from USAID, will assist the governments of the countries of Central Asia in adopting and implementing guidelines developed during the conference.

The conference has brought together regional specialists who regularly work on epidemiological, laboratory, clinical, and veterinary aspects of avian influenza. Each of these groups developed guidelines in their particular field. Additionally, experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shared international experience on the issue.

Support for the region’s avian influenza preparedness is one of the many assistance programs made possible by the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Since 1992, the American people through USAID have provided more than \$1.5 billion in programs that support economic growth, social sector, and democratic institutions in Central Asia.

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